

Sec. 4.01.2 Germany
(Who's Who in CIA)

Sec. 4.01.4 - Our Man Flint
- Kiss Me and Let
Them Die

FLINT'S MISSION TO INDIA

[Article by V. Simonov, APN ["Novosti" Press Agency], for Sovetskaya Kul'tura (Soviet Culture), New Delhi; Moscow, Sovetskaya Kul'tura, Russian, 9 January 1969, p 4]

That day the heavy doors of the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay closed, as usual, at 6:30 in the evening. Three guards who had been stationed at the main entrance lazily watched the port city as it seemed to to awaken and shake off the numbness of the daytime heat.

The invisible metronome of the city life began gradually to pick up its beat. But inside the Museum it had already been clicking out a mad staccato for a long time. Immediately after the doors were closed, two figures who were covered in black tights dashed into the room containing antique jewelry. From a short distance it seemed that they were soaring noiselessly over the floor. The feet of the late visitors were wearing special canvas shoes with sound-absorbing sponge-rubber soles. The "survey of the exhibition" began with the central showcase, where the unique golden objects produced by the masters of Goa flashed enticingly. With the aid of a saw and a set of screw drivers, the pair in black self-confidently opened the showcase. The mouth of a leather traveling bag instantaneously gobbled up the treasures from the case, including a famous gold medallion with a depiction of the temple of Vidzhaj-Yanagar [?]. The silent slippers slid into the remote rooms of the museum. The broken glass tinkled. . .

The morning newspapers estimated the museum's losses at 18,000 rupees. In and of itself that sum could not impress Bombay, the city of motion-picture millionaires and jewelry magnates. What was of interest was the technique of the robbery itself. Two people in the museum. Black tights. Soundproof shoes. The sawn-through showcases. The residents of Bombay were astonished to discover that they could easily imagine those individual elements in the form of a single, wide-screen, Technicolor, stereophonic performance such as they had already seen many

times in the movies. The robbery at the Prince of Wales Museum was nothing else but an exact copy of a scene in the American movie "How to Steal a Million," starring Peter O'Toole and Audrey Hepburn, which had just been shown on the screens of India.

Nitpicking journalists, it is true, remarked that the Bombay imitators were unable to maintain the "purity of the plot" and allowed some "contaminations" from another American movie, "Jack of Diamonds," where the indefatigable and charming hero (again in black tights) also comes into conflict with a museum showcase.

The incident in the Prince of Wales Museum gave many sober-minded Indians cause to think a bit about two closely interrelated problems: what foreign motion-picture output is finding its way to the Indian screen, and, secondly, what is the morality and ideology for which it serves as advertising?

The "humanitarian" CIA

Lumiere personally founded the exporting of motion-picture films to India, by shipping to that country one of his films in 1896. The newspaper Times of India at that time wrote ceremoniously about the appearance of the country's first "house of living picture." That "house" has, since that time, grown into a network of motion-picture theaters already numbering more than 5000. After 1913, when the first national film was created, the number of "living pictures" with the participation of Indian heroes has been growing at a tremendous rate. In 1965, India produced 304 films -- almost twice as many as produced in Hollywood. The stars of the Indian motion pictures -- Sat'yadzhit Rey, Radzh Kapur, Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, and Ritvik Gatak [all names transliterated from Russian] -- have won the acknowledgement of a world-wide motion-picture audience.

At the same time, in recent years, the screens of New Delhi, Bombay, and Madras have been associated more and more, in the minds of the viewers, with the white flag of capitulation to the onslaught of Western, especially American, motion-picture production. As one New Delhi newspaper noted with wry humor, the roar of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lion is now beginning, in India, to drown out the roar of the Bengal tigers.

In the evenings the neon signs over the motion-picture theaters blink out to the Indian moviegoer the names of the latest American hits -- "Kiss Me and Let Them Die," "Spy with my Face," "Moving Target," and "A Queue of Murderers" [all names retranslated from Russian]. Already a cursory familiarization with the plots of these movies convinces one that the export of movies to India in the twentieth century can compete, from the point of view of primitiveness, with its ancestor -- the films of Lumiere.

This, for example, is the mental clot that is foisted on the viewer by a horror film, "Kiss Me and Let Them Die," which recently was flashed across the screens of India.

A mad scientist of unknown nationality (but with the typical name of Boris Karpoff) fosters sinister plans against the United States. He plans to destroy that country -- "the greatest democracy in the world." But not to destroy it in a trite way, not with that "old-hat weapon," the atom-bomb. Instead it would be destroyed by means of a new and horrible invention. Karpoff has in mind the paralyzing not of the economic, or even the military, potential of the United States, but instead what he considered to be the property of American democracy -- sexual potential. As it flies over the United States, Karpoff's special spacecraft is supposed to release a powerful radiation that will deprive the Americans of every hope of perpetuating themselves.

As Karpoff's paranoia gets increasingly worse, he decides to carry out not selective sterilization, but global sterilization, of the world's population. The news of the far-reaching plans hatched by Karpoff puts all the governments into a state of shock. Where is the solution of the problem? That solution appears in the form of a dashing agent from the United States Central Intelligence Agency, a person with a large jaw and invincible success with women. The latter circumstance contains a hint that the agent has a personal interest in preventing worldwide catastrophe.

The agent goes out into the night with the assignment of stopping Karpoff. But Karpoff is not dozing. In the process of cogitating on the fate of the planet, he is crystallizing a plan to take upon himself all the trouble of perpetuating the human species. With that purpose in mind, Karpoff kidnaps girls who are distinguished by the happy correlation of bust dimensions to waist dimensions, he kisses them (hence the name of the movie), and shoves them into a special bunker for long-term preservation.

It is while he is so engaged that he is taken by surprise by the triumphant CIA agent. In the finale, the fantasy of the movie's authors, undermined by the constant over-tension, does not go any farther than a parade of the preserved victims of Karpoff who, clad in bikinis, are kept in some kind of state of suspension inside of tremendous transparent aquariums.

The progressive Indian magazine, Link, in a review of that film, states that it is "intended for viewers whose intellectual level is considerably below the average." But Link does not rush to categorize it as the most recent in a series of senseless films slapped together in Hollywood. The magazine feels that in the movie's plot one can see clearly the traces of a definite propaganda line, namely the attempt to heroize the CIA as an institution created to protect mankind from the "Red" aggressors.

Another movie in the genre of a hymn to the American intelligence service is a motion-picture opus, produced by Twentieth Century-Fox, which has just completed a tour on the screens of India. The movie is "Our Man Flint." The scenarist uses in the movie the old thesis that evil comes from the nether world. Three maniacal scientists have already resolved the problem of controlling the heat within the earth and are not working feverishly on the question of whether they should freeze mankind or, on the contrary, burning it in the fire of volcanoes.

The world is seized by panic, but the United States government is calm. The personnel files of the CIA contain a card on a certain Flint -- a super-agent of rare abilities.

Flint, naturally, prevents the world from becoming too hot for mankind. Once again the CIA is presented as the bulwark of humanitarianism and the protector of the victims of aggression.

The films that were mentioned are far from the only examples of American film propaganda in favor of the CIA, which finds its way onto the Indian screen. Analyzing that phenomenon, the country's progressive press sees in it a definite, well thought-out plan. Obviously the ideological strategists of the United States, controlling their motion-picture export to Asia, hope strongly that people will speak well of the CIA there. That hypothesis is true even moreso with regard to India, where things are unusually tough for the real Flints. The Indian newspapers are replete with the unmasking of the subversive activities of American secret services on the territory of the republic. In the sensational book of the German journalist Julius Mader [?], Who's Who in the CIA, there is a rather substantial list of 119 names of diplomat spies who, at one time or another, have operated in India. Many of them were caught red-handed and evicted from the country.

In attempting to save the reputation of the CIA, and, consequently, the prestige of its foreign policy on the Asian continent, the United States makes active use of all means of mass propaganda, not least of all the well-directed export of motion pictures. That is why, without pausing to take a breath, but shooting to the right and left, the likeable murderer and ardent champion of democracy, Flint, rushes across the screens of New Delhi, Calcutta, and Madras.

Propagandistic Movie Negatives

As a result of parliamentary elections in the state of Madras, the nationalistic party of the South, "Dravida Munetra Kazhagam" [?] (DMK) came into power. The candidate from the DMK, a completely unknown 27-year-old student, got more votes than the former president of the ruling party, the Indian National Congress, Kamaraj [?], who was a candidate in the same electoral district.

That fact became the biggest sensation of the election. It also caused a sensation among the theoreticians of Indian cinematography. The fact of the matter is that many of the most popular leaders of the DMK have a second job as -- of all things! -- movie actors. A very important Indian movie critic, and one of the authors of the book Movies of India, S. Krishnaswami, subsequently remarked that "the DMK party could defeat its political opponents -- and that defeat was, in many regards, unexpected -- only as a result of the utilization of movies to advance their doctrines and ideas of separatism among the masses."

The extremely active influence of the national movies upon intrapolitical life is explained by a number of things. Movies have a mass audience in India. Under conditions when, practically speaking, no professional theater exists, and television is currently taking its very first steps, cinematography -- together with the radio and the press -- plays the role of a very important means of mass communication. Remarking on the tremendous influence that is exerted by films upon the formation of the moral principles and political sympathies of the Indian young people, the local press writes, in alarm, about the fact that the national screen is being used by Western movie companies to propagandize an alien ideology.

We have in mind not only the cult of violence that is typical of American movie exports, and not only the movie epics devoted to the crimes and agents of the CIA. The uncontrolled import of films into India makes it possible for American centers of foreign-policy propaganda, of the type of the USIA, to carry out a well-camouflaged, practically speaking, unnoticeable "movie correction" of Indian public opinion on the basic international problems.

It is worthy of note that several months ago, during the time when West German Chancellor Kiesinger was visiting India, Indian screens were showing several American films that had been based on "East German material." For example, Indian moviegoers were acquainted with the latest creation of Alfred Hitchcock, "The Torn Curtain." The famous master of movie thrillers was obviously recruited to create films about the German Democratic Republic [East Germany] on the recipe of the propagandist's negative: change everything white to black.

The choice of the low-grade movie concoction about the German Democratic Republic and the dragging it across the screens of India are not accidental. As is well known, large progressive groups in India are in favor of the recognition of the German Democratic Republic and the establishment of normal diplomatic relations with that country. In particular, that demand was recently made by a large group of deputies of the Indian Parliament. The close, mutually advantageous economic collaboration that has existed between India and the GDR since 1954 logically led to the conclusion of a treaty to exchange permanent trade representations. In the governmental circles of India, more and more support is being given to the opinion that, without the participation of the GDR it is impossible to resolve successfully the problems of European and international security.

These tendencies could not fail to frighten the so-called "information" services of West Germany and the United States that deal with India.

Vietnam in the American production

Recently, as I was driving along on the central streets of New Delhi, I happened to notice a large group of Indians who had gathered near the entrance to the local branch of the USIS. Above the crowd were posters against the American aggression in Vietnam. Dozens of Indian authors and poets came to Sikandra Road in order to block the entrance to the movie theater where American documentary films about Vietnam were being shown.

The beam of the USIS movie projector which illuminated the word "Vietnam" seemed to be indicating a problem that is greatly agitating the American political observers in India. As is well known, the evaluation by the Indian government of the events in Vietnam is far from one that satisfies the United States.

For the past several months the local press has repeatedly mentioned the attempts of American diplomacy to exert pressure upon New Delhi in order to achieve a more "elastic" approach to the Vietnam problem. It is natural that this same task proved to be in the center of attention of the American exporters of movie propaganda. However, they did not decide to utilize the all-Indian screen to rehabilitate the aggression of the United States in Vietnam. The preference was given instead to a "closed festival" of documentary films on Vietnam which were shown in the USIS building in New Delhi.

The "festival" caused mass protests on the part of the Indian public and ended in complete fiasco. Reviewing the American documentary films, the movie critic of the newspaper Patriot wrote, "The most memorable element in those films was the presence of the faces of the Vietnamese. The expression on those faces, which were devoid of even the shadow of a smile, incontrovertibly attests to the criminality and unjustness of the American presence in Vietnam. The spoken commentary was unable to erase that impression."

All five films shown at the USIS "Vietnamese festival" in New Delhi were made in the same "director's style." None of them showed any scenes of burning trees, or Vietnamese mothers, with hair turned gray by grief, as they bent over the bodies of their dead children, or the bestialities of the "Green Berets." In the USIS films about the Vietnam war the Indians did not even see that war. Rapid-fire automatic weapons, aircraft carriers, and Phantom jets were no match in the competition with the scissors wielded by the American movie censors. As soon as the movie came around to military actions, the screen was lighted up by the broad smile of the Under Secretary of State of the United States, William Bundy, who came to the aid of the creators of the films as,

armed with a map, a long pointer, and a still longer lecture, he explained exactly what was happening in Vietnam.

"Not one of the foreign embassies in New Delhi engages in such unbridled propaganda of militarism," was the evaluation that the progressive Indian press gave to the "festival."

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In the evenings, when the stones, the asphalt, and the buildings of New Delhi throw off into the air the heat that has been accumulated during the day, thousands of Indians go into the air-conditioned, neon-lighted "houses of living pictures."

What awaits them there is a meeting with the movie hero -- the honored guest of that "home." But often, at that moment when, at the end of the show, by tradition, the national anthem is played and the screen shows the three-colored flag of the republic, the Indian moviegoers are seized by a sensation that the guest was an uninvited one. He was an outsider. With an outsider's morality.

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